

Inspection of a good school: Blackbrook Primary School

Ashbourne Crescent, Taunton, Somerset TA1 2RA

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 May 2023

Outcome

Blackbrook Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Blackbrook Primary School is a happy, caring place to learn. Pupils speak confidently about the school's values, such as inclusion and responsibility. They say these values support them to get on with others and help them in their work.

Pupils enjoy learning through a range of subjects and experiences. These enhance their wider development. Experiences include curriculum domain leaders, mental health ambassadors and sports leaders. Many pupils take part in school clubs, such as yoga, sports and crafts.

Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils and their behaviour. Consequently, there is a calm, purposeful atmosphere in the school. Pupils care for one another. They respect staff and follow routines well. Pupils say bullying is rare. They are confident that if a problem occurs, staff put a stop to it at once. Pupils are safe and say that adults take good care of them.

Parents and carers support the school's work. Many praise the care and sense of community the school develops in every child.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders, at all levels, are dedicated and enthusiastic. Pupils follow a curriculum that is broad and balanced and well suited to their needs. Subject leaders and teachers consider carefully what they want pupils to learn through the curriculum. This essential knowledge is mapped out in detail by subject leaders. For example, the mathematics curriculum is well sequenced and thought through. This begins in the early years foundation stage where, for example, children learn to count cubes and match them to numbers. Pupils deepen their mathematical understanding as they move through the school. This supports them to tackle increasingly complex problems, using what they have previously learned.

Reading is a high priority in the school. Staff receive appropriate training, which supports them to teach the phonics curriculum well. Children learn to read as soon as they start school. This also develops their spoken language skills. Children expand their vocabulary and develop their reading fluency, which prepares them well for Year 1. Those pupils who fall behind in their reading receive well-planned support to help them catch up quickly. Reading areas are full of interesting books for pupils to enjoy. Leaders consider carefully the books that teachers share with pupils. Pupils say that teachers make reading exciting. Pupils read regularly and choose books that challenge and interest them. This sparks an enthusiasm and love of reading.

In some subjects, staff use assessment effectively to check how well pupils have learned the curriculum. Where this is the case, teachers have an accurate insight into what pupils know and remember. However, in other subjects, teachers' use of assessment is not well developed. This means that gaps in pupils' knowledge of the curriculum are not routinely identified and remedied.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff identify pupils' needs and provide pupils with the support they need to follow the full curriculum. Leaders work well with families and external agencies. This is particularly effective for pupils with social and emotional needs.

Leaders create a school culture where everyone is valued. Pupils listen to others' ideas with maturity. Pupils' personal development is built through the wide range of opportunities on offer. Pupils learn to respect different faiths, cultures and lifestyles. They know how to look after their own mental and physical health. These experiences help them to develop into kind, respectful individuals.

The school is led with consideration and compassion. Governors and trust leaders check the effectiveness of school leaders' actions. They ask challenging questions and hold leaders to account. They know what the school does well and what needs further improvement. Staff appreciate how leaders consider their workload. They are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure there is a culture of vigilance at the school. They make appropriate checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with pupils. All members of the school community know that the safeguarding of pupils is the priority. Staff, including governors, receive quality training. Staff record any concerns and regularly check these are making a difference.

Leaders know vulnerable pupils and their families well. They are tenacious in securing the help that they need. Parents are confident that pupils are safe and secure in school. Pupils learn to stay safe, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders do not have a secure enough understanding of how well pupils have learned the curriculum. Therefore, some pupils develop gaps in their understanding, which are not identified and rectified. Subject leaders should check pupils' understanding of the curriculum in all subjects so they can be assured that pupils retain the knowledge they need in the longer term.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Blackbrook Primary School, to be good in October 2013.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	146704
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10268546
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	239
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ian Dickson
Headteacher	Barney Rycroft
Website	www.blackbrookschoo.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Oak Partnership Trust.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.
- Blackbrook Primary School converted to become an academy school in January 2019. When its predecessor school, Blackbrook Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, school leaders, representatives of the governing body and the school improvement lead of the trust.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked

at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of work.

- The inspector looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about other subjects.
- The inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector reviewed safeguarding records, including the single central record of recruitment checks on staff.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. The inspector met with parents at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Richard Vaughan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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